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Finding your emotional balance: A Guide for Women, is a self-help book written by American psychiatrist, Dr Merry Noel Miller. The book focuses on the emotional and psychological well-being of women throughout the life course and offers solutions and strategies to address and maintain emotional well-being. Dr Miller draws on personal experience of mental illness which has enabled her to develop an empathy, understanding and passion for this topic.

The book recognises that women, face challenges during their lives, specific to their gender, which may affect their psychological and emotional well-being and balance. Noel Miller suggests that women can be helped maintain their emotional balance. She also suggests that there are a number of strategies that can be adopted to help when that balance is lost.

The book is divided into two parts. Part one provides five chapters, each dedicated to a different stage in a woman's life, for example, chapter one discusses adolescence, chapter two premenstrual disorders. Part one continues with a discussion on the childbearing years, the menopausal transition and finishes with a discussion on emotional issues facing women in the senior years. Part two then focuses on the major psychiatric and psychological issues that may face a woman at any age. For example, part two includes discussions on depression, anxiety, substance abuse and grief. The book ends with a short chapter on women's resilience and suggests that we cannot always choose what happens to us, but we can choose our reaction to events.

This is a well written and comprehensive book, focusing on the emotional well-being of women throughout the life trajectory and offering strategies to women in order to maintain more balance in their emotional lives. The text is written in an accessible and easy to read manner, recognising not only the genetic and biomedical origins of emotional well-being but also the social and environmental causes. Similarly, strategies offered to combat emotional ill-health are not only pharmaceutical but include a range of non-medical treatments such as time management, spirituality, exercise, diet and mindfulness based cognitive therapy. The author is an advocate of positive psychology.

The book is a pleasant read and may be helpful for nurses who wish to understand the major milestones in a women's life and how they might help them gain more "balance." I am not sure the book does offer ground breaking advice on mental health problems, however it does provide a comprehensive insight into women's emotional life and would be a welcome addition to any library of health care or nursing.

420 words

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